

Vertical CCLS Model Design

General Design

The Vertical Collaborative Coaching and Learning in Science (V-CCLS) model is a modified version of the traditional CCLS model that we use in SEF. This V-CCLS model will incorporate most of the basic tenets of the common CCLS model that the district has been using for the last five years but will be modified to accommodate the fact that these are not school-based teams and to take advantage of having teachers across all grade levels within content strands pursue a course of study (COS) together.

V-CCLS groups will consist of all SEF Fellows who are within the same content strand to form teams of 4 to 6 members. Groups will meet one time to determine norms and determine course of study and pick a research article, one time to discuss the chosen research article, one time per person to debrief the lesson (ex: groups with 5 members will have 5 debrief meetings), and one time to synthesize the work from now until December. Groups will need to use time outside of SEF meeting time to discuss the chosen research paper, videotape lessons, view observation-videos, debrief the observation-videos, look at student work, and prepare for a presentation. Groups will present findings and learnings from their COS at the January 20 SEF meeting.

V-CCLS Structure

Shared Norms

V-CCLS groups need to determine norms for their group in order to have effective conversations. A norm is a behavior that the group will hold its members to so, as time goes on, those behaviors become normal. Norms can include ways to give warm and cool feedback, how to handle lateness or absences, how to handle people who dominate the conversation or those who don't share, ideas around confidentiality, description of the atmosphere the group wants to work in, and so on.

As time progresses, group members should feel comfortable enough to articulate their common beliefs around education, student learning, professional development, reflective practice, and leadership. Though no two people need to necessarily share the same views, all should find that they can respect that their colleague has a value that he or she firmly believes in. Some common norms around what all group members feel around education (ex: all students have the potential to learn) should be established when the group first comes together and can be added to as time goes on.

Once norms are agreed upon, one member needs to be responsible for typing these up and distributing them to all members in the group. Please send one copy, which will be kept confidential and not be shared with other groups, to Allison Scheff.

Agreed Upon Vertical Course of Study

A Course of Study (COS) is the action-research topic that the entire group is going to explore via research articles, observations, and looking at the student work from the observed lesson. One of the biggest findings from our evaluators at PERG is that the strongest CCLSs pick their own Course of Study. V-CCLS groups will still determine their own COS but the topic must focus on science in the classroom (as opposed to looking at writing, for example) and it must be looked at vertically across the grade bands.

Focus on Student Learning in Science Content Area

The range of conversations that you can have around your COS is limitless. However, in order to promote professional growth and success in your classroom, these conversations need to focus on student learning in science and be explored vertically across the grade bands. According to DuFour, the mission “is not simply to ensure that students are taught but to ensure that they learn. This simple shift—from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning—has profound implications.”¹

Videotaped Lesson Observations

V-CCLS is unique in the fact that we are blending two successful BSP activities: Vertical Teaming and CCLS. The topic of the lessons that you will be videotaping and observing need to be decided by the group and needs to be vertical in nature. For example, all of the lessons videotaped should show a class learning about the particle nature of matter. Together, these videotaped lessons will allow us all to see how the particle nature of matter is taught at the elementary level, middle school level, and high school level. However, the topic of the lesson is different from the COS topic you are choosing. The COS you will engage in will be explored through these vertical videos.

Ideally, Fellows would be able to observe every other member of the group in person. However, we realize that is not logistically possible. Instead, V-CCLS will use videotapes of teachers to serve as a proxy for in-class observations. We will use the videotapes to our advantage so that Fellows can watch the videos at their own discretion (although it must be done prior to the debriefing of that video observation) and the videos can be watched multiple times. Additionally, the teacher being observed will be able to review and reflect on their own classroom instruction.

Face-to-Face Group Meetings

V-CCLS meetings need to happen when everyone is available to meet and in a place everyone can access. The conversations that will take place during the V-CCLS cycle need to happen in person. This work is hard and the conversations can be sensitive so it can only be done in person. The conversations cannot take on the depth they need to have over the phone or via email. Please see “Model of a V-CCLS Meeting” to see what a typical meeting should look like.

¹ DuFour, R. (2004). What is a “Professional Learning Community”?. *Educational Leadership*, 61(8),6.

Rotating Facilitator

The facilitator role in the V-CCLS groups will rotate, with each member being in the facilitator role once. A group member cannot be in the facilitator role while his or her video is the focus of the conversation. The role of the facilitator is important: it is the person who maintains the focus of the group, keeps the conversation moving in a productive manner, ensures that the teacher being debriefed and the other group members walk away from the meeting having had learned something new or different, videotapes the debriefing meeting, and is responsible for all materials that go with the observation he or she will be facilitating. Please see “Model of a V-CCLS Meeting” for more details.

Anchoring conversations in research

V-CCLS, just like traditional CCLS, values research-grounded conversations. As a group, you will select one article from a peer-reviewed journal to ground your conversations in and inform your instruction. The findings from this article and your interpretations of it should be the skeleton of your conversations around the observation debriefs and when you look at the student work from the observed lesson.

Looking at Student Work

Student work is an essential part of any conversation that is focused on student learning. Looking at the student work from the observed lesson adds another piece of evidence to demonstrate what the students learned and how well they mastered that lesson. As experienced teachers, you may be able to view the work and provide a different perspective or a suggestion to the observed teacher to help their students move along, or you may receive new ideas for your own classroom. Additionally, because the COS you will be engaged in will have a vertical context to it, it will be exciting and to see what students are expected to do at other grade levels rather than just read or hear about it.

Using reflective dialogue

The outcome of CCLS is increased understanding around student learning in science. To get there, communication is key. According to *Leading Every Day*, dialogue is a “reflective learning process in which people seek to understand each other’s viewpoints and deeply held assumptions by talking together to deepen their collective understanding. The goal is increased understanding—not a decision, not a step, just greater understanding on ever person’s part”.²

² Kaser, J., Mundry, S, Stiles, K.E., & Loucks-Horsley, S. (2002). *Leading every day*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.